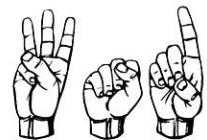




Between Us...



...a monthly communication newsletter with and for our parents.

March 9, 2012 Vol. 30, No. 4

Dates Of Special Interest

March

2	Student departure day
4	Students return PM
8	Student departure day
9	staff in-service/work day
11	Students return
16	Student departure day
18	Students return PM
23	End of 3 rd quarter Student departure day
26-30	Spring Break

April

1	Students return PM
6	Student departure day
9	Students return AM
13	Student departure day
15	Students return PM
20	Student departure day
22	Students return PM
27	Student departure day
29	Students return PM

May

4	Mid-quarter Student departure day
5	Prom (look for a letter about prom later in this newsletter!)
6	Students return PM
11	Student departure day
13	Students return PM
18	Student departure day
20	Students return PM
25	Student departure day
28	Memorial Day Students return PM

June

1	Student departure day End of 4 th quarter
3	Students return PM
7	9 AM Elementary Awards 1 PM HS Awards
8	Student departure day 9 AM MS Awards 1 PM Seniors Graduation Class of 2012

Message from the Director

Alex H. Slappey



SUCCESS AND FAILURE Double Standards

It's funny how people are sometimes put into positions where they don't really have control and then are blamed for the failure of a task based on someone's definition of success and failure. Success can be defined in many ways. So can failure. One of the things I've learned to do is judge success or failure by a set of more neutral standards. While it's inevitable that we will all be influenced by how others define success or failure, as I've become older I've also become less and less concerned about the definition most others may have. My own kids think I'm just becoming more stubborn in my old age. That may well be, I remember having the same thoughts about my own dad.

This doesn't mean I ignore the opinions of everyone else, this means I'm far more selective in whose definition I will allow to influence my standard for success or failure. These are folks who I believe have an unbiased understanding of the matter.

"I don't know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everybody."

Bill Cosby

One of my pet peeves are those folks who judge WSD's success or failure via their own misguided perceptions. Although not true, there is a perception among some that WSD is a school of failures and multiply disabled students. I'd find this funny if it weren't so denigrating toward WSD's students and staff. Anyone who spends significant time at WSD realizes that WSD has a large core group of perfectly normal students, those who achieve well academically, athletically, and socially. Of course we also have a number of students who struggle, just as any school does. However, the vast majority of those struggling students are sent to WSD only after they have failed in programs that are not

BETWEEN US... This is a newsletter for parents of the students of the Wisconsin School for the Deaf. Approximately six issues are planned for the 2011-2012 school year. Parents are invited to send newsworthy items to the school office.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, religion, age, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability.

Message from Director cont.

designed to meet their needs. These students are often significantly delayed in language acquisition and social/emotional development as well as academics. Despite this, WSD has a good record with these students. I wish I had a nickel for every time someone has told me how well we have done with delayed students over the years, students that others had viewed as "failures".

This doesn't mean that the school districts are not trying their best. There isn't a district in Wisconsin that tries to put students into positions where they fail. They often do well with students who already have a strong language foundation and may not require the services that WSD can provide. For those students an interpreter or a teacher who signs English may be sufficient. However, there are a number of students who don't have that language foundation, whose language is emerging or non-existent and require a visual language.

The problem is complex and involves a number of factors. Most districts, especially the smaller rural districts, don't have the unique resources needed to meet the needs of those students. WSD is the only school in Wisconsin that can offer a rich 24 hours American Sign Language (ASL) immersion environment, a crucial element to language acquisition in those students who cannot acquire language through aural means. Many school districts don't have a core mass of deaf students who can provide each other the linguistic interaction and feedback which is a primary process by which children learn language. The vast majority of districts in Wisconsin have only a few deaf or hard of hearing students, often spread over several grade levels. The acquisition of language requires models on which children can develop their language skills. WSD also has a large core group of staff who have native or near native fluency in ASL. This provides a more refined and mature language model for students.

Another factor is the lack of understanding of these considerations by professional and parents. Well meaning professionals often interpret the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to mean that the least restrictive environment (LRE) is automatically the neighborhood school, the same neighborhood school that may have one other deaf student and no staff who can sign. They believe this is not a problem if they can provide an interpreter. For a student who needs rich and varied language input an interpreter doesn't cut it. Interpreters don't teach language, they translate or interpret language. This is like providing a book to a reader whom hasn't mastered reading and expecting him to learn to read just by reading the book. No way Jose...it doesn't work.

The young pre-school child is at great risk for language delay when placed with an interpreter who is simply interpreting the teacher's language. First of all, the interpreter is providing the child a visual model of English and research shows clearly that English is an aural language, learned via hearing. English is not learned visually, a fact proven by three generations of underachieving deaf and hard of hearing individuals who were subject to a visual English approach. These are the same individuals who graduated with an average 4th grade reading level. Young children need a language that they can play with, model, experiment with, and manipulate. Just like a child learns how to use his or her body by playing, so a child needs to do the same with the language. They need a rich and varied core group of other children and adults in which to interact, model their language, and get feedback.

Interpreters are not teachers and they don't constitute the needed language role model. Nor does the teacher who signs in a class of hearing children. One of two language models in the environment is a very poor substitute for a program where all the children and staff sign fluently in ASL. Language acquisition is about access, usage, and exposure to the base language.

"What we have to learn to do, we learn by doing."
Aristotle

The older student has a different set of problems. Unless the student has a strong English language foundation an interpreter or a teacher who signs English forces the student to perform two complex processes where hearing children only need to do one. Let's take a class in science for example. Science is difficult enough as it is. Students need to concentrate on the subject matter. A deaf child who has ASL fluency, but whose teacher or interpreter is presenting the content in signed English must not only comprehend the subject, but must also translate from signed English to ASL. If the student has strong ASL fluency, but not so strong in English, most of the student's mental concentration would be on translating from English to ASL in order to understand the content. To improve the acquisition of ASL, the accessible language, the student needs ASL. To comprehend the subject matter in his or her strongest language, the student needs ASL.

None of this even begins to touch on the myriad of other factors important in the overall development of the child such as social and emotional development. All these other factors can have a profound impact on the success or failure of the child's academic development. I believe that WSD has had excellent success with children that have spent years in programs that couldn't meet their needs. I can personally name a number of students who came to WSD after their prime language acquisition years had passed and despite this were able to achieve independence and self

Message from Director cont.

sufficiency. The unfortunate thing is that these students could have gone much further if their needs had been recognized earlier.

While we don't succeed with all of our students, no school does, we need to remember that the definition of success or failure must be viewed with a strong understanding of the matter. And we must never stop despite the views of the uninformed. We must never let such criticism influence our determination to succeed.

"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."
Sir Winston Churchill

WSD Birthdays



April

- 1 Dylan Laux
- 3 Emma Vollmar
- 8 Erica Her
- 11 Nicholas Johnson
Ellie Lister
- 13 Madison Bongard
- 15 Lennon Morrissey
- 20 Jose Zepeda-Amador
Paige Scheffield
Lawson Vollmar
- 21 Halina Kangas
- 24 Lillian Squires
- 25 Anna Dorst

May

- 2 Hailey Przybylski
- 8 Emily Nielsen
- 12 Tyler Burckhardt
- 14 Markiese Mims
- 15 Bradley Persson
- 16 Anna McCartney
- 18 Alexander Kubiske
- 28 Julian Chairez Jr
- 31 Dillon Hall

Special Olympics News

The Special Olympic basketball team finished the season with a 6 and 3 season. A tough game at the Regional Tournament in Wilmot brought the season to an end. Congratulations to all the Special Olympic team basketball players for working hard and doing your best.

The Special Olympic skills basketball players will have their Regional Tournament at Badger High School in Lake Geneva on Saturday March 10th. No times have been announced as of yet. Good luck to the skills players.

Sign Song Dancers

The other day SSD went on a small trip to Menomonee Falls. Brady Bostwick's aunt, Stephanie Resch, is a teacher at Shady Lane Elementary School. She arranged a wonderful day where SSD performed in the morning at Shady Lane and then again performed at another elementary school in the afternoon. Her and her husband were also gracious enough to buy us all lunch and a Starbuck's treat!

I want to APPLAUD the students who went:

Brady Bostwick
Alvin Horton
Anna McCartney
Gunner Hahn
Anna Dorst
Jasmine Perkins

They performed for more than a 1000 parents, students, staff, and community members yesterday! Every administrator and teacher that we met thanked them profusely for their GREAT and IMPACTFUL performance. Imagine the impact and ripple effect that these 6 students will have on all those people!!!

Our students were kind, generous with what they shared about themselves, spirited, gracious and made me so proud to be their coach! Our kids received hundreds of hugs from children yesterday. Our SSD students said getting those hugs are the favorite part of their performances!

Sign Song Dancers cont.

Jasmine's first experience was yesterday and she just glowed from the experience!

At Shady Lane, SSD was actually the school's reward for earning enough points through their PBIS program. The students said their reward of SSD was well worth it.

When you see these kids today (along with Arthur Hart and Zom Walker) please say thank you to them for being the best ambassadors we could hope for.

Also wish them luck next week when they go and perform at our WESPDHH Family conference where they will once again impact parents of children who have hearing loss. Parents of young deaf children will see how their child's disability won't stop them from developing into great young adults! Never mind the impact that SSD has on the d/hh children themselves!

THANK YOU again to my AWESOME dancers!

Julie Holma



Second quarter honors

Elementary Honors:

High Honor Roll - Madison Bongard, Roberto Gonzalez, Wyatt Keller, Faith Sims, Pricilla Needs, Dillion Hall

Honor Roll - Julian Ortiz, Keisha Payne, Lucero Uriostegui, Jazmin Victorino

MS Honors:

High Honor Roll - Katelyn Miller

Honor Roll - Malia Christenson, Rose Kangas, Briana Robertson

HS Honors:

High Honor Roll – Brandaun Carter, Julian Chairez, Tony Davis, Charly Fleege, Nick Johnson, Taylor Koss, Cindy Martinez, Anna McCartney, Emily Nielsen

Honor Roll – Angel Aslani, Anna Dorst, Veronica Duran, Tanner Evans, Gared Gannon, Gunner Hahn, Alvin Horton, Alex Kubiske, Dylan Laux, Lyssa Matsche, Olivia Percifield, Sarab Singh, Shane Tisa, Ka Youa Xiong

Book News

Every year, I take my book club members on a special trip and this year we will be heading to Madison to see "Lord of the Flies" at the Overture Center. I was asked to pass along information regarding student matinee performances, in case anyone else is interested. There are still some tickets available for all shows.

The Children's Theater of Madison is presenting "Lord of the Flies" this Spring as part of their student matinee program. Shows will be on Friday, March 23 at 9:30 am, Tuesday, March 27 at 9:30 am, Wednesday, March 28 at 9:30 am, and Thursday, March 29 at 10:00 am. Tickets are \$8/ticket or \$6.50/ticket for groups of 20 or more. For more information, please contact Jane Schroeder jane@ctmtheater.org or (608)255-2080 ext. 103.

Here's a link to the CTM student matinee website
<http://www.ctmtheater.org/Educators/StudentMatinées.aspx>



You and Your Child



Discipline

No. 43; Updated September 2008

Children do not always do what parents want. When a child misbehaves, the parent must decide how to respond. All children need rules and expectations to help them learn appropriate behavior. How does a parent teach a child the rules and, when those rules are broken, what should parents do?

Parents should begin by talking to each other about how they want to handle discipline and establish the rules. It is important to view discipline as teaching not punishment. Learning to follow rules keeps a child safe and helps him or her learn the difference between right and wrong.

Once rules have been established, parents should explain to the child that broken rules carry consequences. For example, Here are the rules. When you follow the rules, this will happen and if you break a rule, this is what will happen. Parents and the child should decide together what the rewards and consequences will be. Parents should always acknowledge and offer positive reinforcement and support when their child follows the rules. Parents must also follow through with an appropriate consequence when the child breaks a rule. Consistency and predictability are the cornerstones of discipline and praise is the most powerful reinforcer of learning.

Children learn from experience. Having logical consequences for misbehavior helps them learn that they are accountable for their actions, without damaging their self-esteem. For example, if children are fighting over the television, computer or a video game, turn it off. If a child spills milk at the dinner table while fooling around, have the child clean it up. Some behaviors have natural consequences. For example, a teenager who stays up too late may suffer the natural consequences of being tired the next day. Another type of consequence that can be effective is the suspension or delay of a privilege. For example, if a child breaks the rule about where they can go on their bike, take away the bike for a few days. When a child does not do chores, he or she cannot do something special like spend the night with a friend or rent a movie.

There are different styles and approaches to parenting. Research shows that effective parents raise well-adjusted children who are more self-reliant, self-controlled, and positively curious than children raised by parents who are punitive, overly strict (authoritarian), or permissive. Effective parents operate on the belief that both the child and the parent have certain rights and that the needs of both are important. Effective parents don't need to use physical force to discipline the child, but are more likely to set clear rules and explain why these rules are important. Effective parents reason with their children and consider the youngsters' points of views even though they may not agree with them.

The following are tips for effective discipline:

- Trust your child to do the right thing within the limits of your child's age and stage of development.
- Make sure what you ask for is reasonable.
- Speak to your child as you would want to be spoken to if someone were reprimanding you. Don't resort to name-calling, yelling, or disrespect.
- Be clear about what you mean. Be firm and specific.
- Model positive behavior. "Do as I say, not as I do" seldom works.
- Allow for negotiation and flexibility, which can help build your child's social skills.
- Let your child experience the consequences of his behavior.
- Whenever possible, consequences should be delivered immediately, should relate to the rule broken, and be short enough in duration that you can move on again to emphasize the positives.
- Consequences should be fair and appropriate to the situation and the child's age.

Parenting classes and coaching can be helpful in learning to be an effective parent. If parents have serious concerns about continuing problems with their child's behavior, consultation with a child and adolescent psychiatrist or other qualified mental health professional may be helpful.

For Between Us

Health Center - Blood Drive

Our blood drive was a success. We collected 32 units of blood.
Thanks to our students, staff & the surrounding community for donating!
Special thanks go to the Student Body Council for their awesome help!
Received many positive compliments about their friendliness & mannerism!
Also thanks to our kitchen staff, power house staff, & interpreters for making this possible.

Thank you!
Susie Kelly
Diane Nelson

REMINDER: For the safety of your child and other students at WSD

- **All medication will be stored in the Health Center in the original pharmacy or manufacturer labeled container.**
Medications sent in baggies, pill boxes, or other containers will be sent home.
- All medication should be given to the bus chaperone, or designated responsible adult. Medications will then be delivered to the school nurse.
DO NOT pack in student's backpack or suitcase.

Thank you!

FAQ on Response to Intervention

for School-Based Occupational Therapists and Occupational Therapy Assistants



Response to Intervention (RtI) is the practice of (a) providing high-quality instruction/ intervention matched to student needs and (b) using learning rate over time and level of performance to make important educational decisions (National Association of State Directors of Special Education [NASDSE], 2005). It is a multi-tiered approach to **general education** that focuses on scientific-based research. It is an outgrowth of the evidence on how to deal with learning disorders (NASDSE, 2005).

What is so unique about RtI?

Unlike traditional special education interventions that assume learning or behavioral problems lie within the student, RtI looks first at the curriculum and how it is being taught for remediation. Before a special education referral, strategies such as differentiated instruction or tutoring are used to assist students who are not performing as expected. "The main objective of RtI is not to identify students for special education, but rather to help all students achieve at a proficient level and ultimately [schools] make adequate yearly progress" (Nebraska Department of Education, 2005, p. 7).

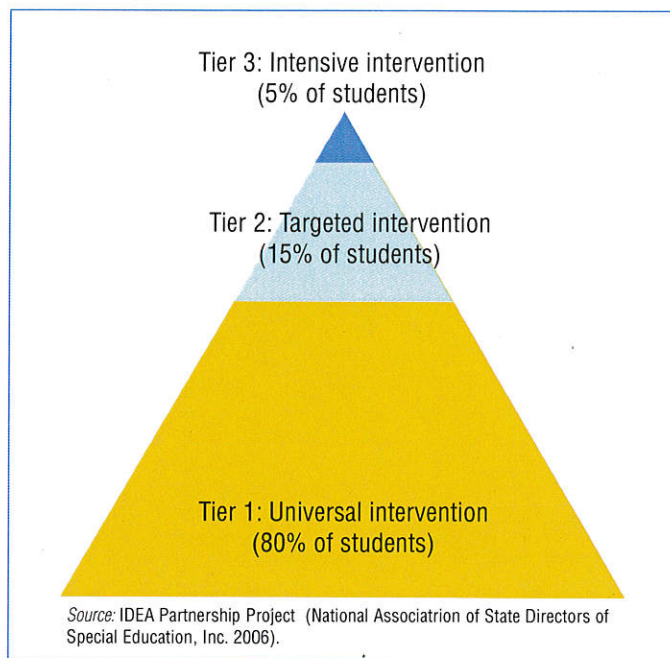
What prompted educators' interest in RtI?

The RtI approach to problem solving has emerged at the forefront of a national effort to provide immediate intervention for any child having difficulty with general education instruction or behavior skills. Originally explored as a methodology for assisting children with possible specific learning disabilities (SLD), evidence has supported its effectiveness as an intervention approach for *any* student experiencing problems with the general education curriculum and/or with behavioral self-management. Although some students may need more intensive services (such as special education and related services), many students are helped without needing a referral to special education.

What does RtI look like?

Many states and local districts use a three-tiered model (See Figure 1 on page 2). In a three-tiered model, the first tier would be high quality instructional, behavioral, and social-

Figure 1.
Tiers of Intervention



emotional supports for **all** students in general education. This tier is sometimes called universal interventions or core instruction. Schools use whole-class screening to determine whether students are learning the curriculum content and/or whether behavioral performance is appropriate for the age/grade of the students. Research has demonstrated that for both learning and behavior, 80% or more of students should be performing at expectations. If the number is less than 80%, general education leadership looks first to the quality of the instruction. The teacher is provided with any needed mentoring or coaching regarding instructional methodologies or behavioral management.

After a period of time, students are screened again. It would be expected that 20% or less of the students would still be having difficulty. Targeted intensive prevention or remediation for some students may be initiated if their performance or rate of progress is behind the norm for their grade and educational program. School-based problem-solving teams may convene to develop strategies for addressing the needs of these students. Interventions may include the implementation of alternative instructional methodologies, or more intensive instruction such as tutoring sessions for the problematic content area. Once these interventions are implemented, the students are screened again. Based on evidence in the education literature (Reschly, 2005), it would be expected that Tier 2 interventions would be effective for another 15%, leaving no more than 5% of the students needing more specialized general education services (e.g.,

Title 1), or a special education referral. Tier 3 is intensive 1:1 interventions for students who did not respond sufficiently to Tier 1 and Tier 2.

Is RtI mandated by IDEA or NCLB?

Although the term *response to intervention* is not included within the law or regulations, language about a process like RtI was included in the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA as an alternative method of determining whether a student has a specific learning disability (SLD). RtI is also clearly implied in sections 300.307(a) (2), 300.309(a) (2) (i), 300.311(a) (7) of the IDEA 2004 regulations. Although not a mandate, states are being encouraged by the U.S. Department of Education (U.S. DOE) to adopt RtI. The U.S. DOE is also promoting RtI through the IDEA Partnership Project, which includes the American Occupational Therapy Association.

How does occupational therapy fit into RtI?

Occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants provide services to enhance children's engagement in occupation and to support their participation within various contexts. The areas of occupation that we focus on include: activities of daily living, instrumental activities of daily living, education, work, play, leisure, and social participation. When working within an educational setting, the occupational therapist analyzes barriers and facilitators to performance of these occupations within the context of the educational environment.

During RtI, the occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant may be asked to assist the general education team in some of these areas of occupation. Occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants can be involved at several levels within an RtI approach. IDEA (2004) supports our involvement at §614(a)(1)(E), which states: "The screening of a student by a teacher or specialist to determine appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation shall not be considered to be an evalua-



Table 1.

Sample of Activities Provided by Occupational Therapy Under RtI

Professional Development

- Create a handout for teachers that contains strategies based on scientifically-based evidence to use with various fine motor problems.
- Provide an in-service to teachers on classroom strategies to enhance alertness for learning.
- Provide the teacher with suggestions for positioning students for fine motor activities.
- Join the curriculum committee and provide suggestions for handwriting programs to enhance writing skills for all students.

Evaluation, Services, and Supports

- Observe a student's access and use of the computer and provide suggestions that the staff carries out.
- Provide suggestions for strategies that often help children enhance peer relationships.
- Participate in team brainstorming for strategies/techniques that might improve instructional outcomes.
- (If your state allows screening or pre-referral activities): Screen a student's visual-perceptual skills and provide suggestions for the family/school to use.

tion for eligibility for special education and related services." Additionally, related services are specifically included in 300.208 of the regulations as possible early intervening services which can occur at all levels of RtI. Up to 15% of federal funding to a local education agency can be used for early intervening services. Most states are developing guidance for what constitutes early intervening services from an educational standpoint. Occupational therapy practitioners also need to have a strong knowledge of their state practice act (licensure) and regulations regarding evaluation, screening, and providing interventions before an evaluation for occupational therapy/special education. Typically, activities are provided as professional development or evaluation, services, and supports (34 CFR Part 300.226 (b); see Table 1). These activities should be based on scientifically-based evidence to the degree possible. ■

*Developed for AOTA by
Gloria Frolek Clark, MS, OTR/L, BCP, FAOTA,
and Jean E. Polichino, MS, OTR, FAOTA*

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For more information, contact the American Occupational Therapy Association, the professional society of occupational therapy, representing more than 37,000 occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants, and students working in practice, science, education, and research.



**The American
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Wisconsin School for the Deaf
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Tony Evers, State Superintendent

January 20, 2012

Dear Parents:

We are pleased to announce the 2012 Junior Class Prom. The prom will be on **May 5, 2012 from 6-11 pm in the Grand Ballroom at the University of Wisconsin, Whitewater, WI.** The theme of the prom is: Vegas Night. The cost of tickets for dinner and the prom is \$35 per person. Parents/family of prom attendees are invited to attend the dinner and prom. If parents and/or family members would just like to attend the prom but have dinner on your own, the ticket price per person is \$10. You may pre-order your tickets by contacting:

Kari Wicinski
kari.wicinski@wsd.k12.wi.us
(262) 728-7131

The deadline for prom ticket purchase is April 1, 2011. Students may reserve tickets but all payments are due by the April 1st deadline! NO refunds will be available after this date. The Wisconsin School for the Deaf will provide a coach bus to transport students from WSD to the Prom site and back.

The following forms will be given to students upon purchase of a Prom ticket.

1. A permission slip for prom attendance and staying in the dormitory will be required for each WSD student attending the Prom.
2. Information for ordering professional prom photographs.
3. If your student wishes to invite a guest who is **not** a WSD student, they must ask for a guest form. This must be filled out and submitted for approval by the High School Board. Please do this as soon as possible so there is plenty of time to receive approval.

If you have any questions, please contact me at the email or phone number listed below. We hope you will join us for the 2012 Junior Class Prom.

Sincerely,

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